

# Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults

Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) has a strong commitment to the welfare of all beneficiaries and their protection from abuse and exploitation. We want to develop and maintain an organisational environment that is free of harassment, abuse and exploitation, and to ensure the same in all of our work with communities.

We know that the children and vulnerable adults in the communities with whom we work can be at particular risk. For example, there is a growing awareness that sex offenders are targeting and infiltrating organisations in order to access children. International non-government organisations can be particularly susceptible.

This policy aims to deter, minimise and remove opportunities for abuse of children & vulnerable adults to occur in the scope of our work.

Although we do not usually place long term staff / volunteers / contractors within projects or communities we believe it important that everyone understands this policy. For those who are visiting or working with communities, we will ensure that they are also aware of, and work within, the specific protection policies of the Country Office.

We will also introduce protection requirements for all ETI funded programmes

The policy applies to all:

 Staff (based in London or overseas)

 Contractors and consultants

 Partner agencies

 Volunteers and interns

 Trustees and other Board Committee members

 Journalists, photographers, film/TV producers

 Visitors

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy:

* Children are defined as being someone under the age of 18.
* Vulnerable adults are defined as:
  + those aged over 18 years and who identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves / protect themselves from harm or exploitation; or
  + who, due to their gender, mental or physical health, disability, or as a result of disasters and conflicts, are deemed to be at risk

Abuse can come in many forms:

* Physical abuse
  + Purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child or vulnerable person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
* Emotional abuse
  + A chronic attack on the recipient’s self esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating.
* Neglect
  + The failure to provide or ignoring the need for basic necessities of life (where such necessities are available), such as food, clothing, shelter, medication and supervision.
* Sexual Abuse
  + Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which a vulnerable adult has not consented to or has been coerced into giving consent through abuse. Engaging a child sexually regardless of consent.
* Financial or material abuse
  + Theft, fraud, exploitation, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
* Discriminatory abuse
  + Ageism, racism, sexism based on disability or other harassment

**Awareness**

We will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the issues and problems abuse and the risks to children & vulnerable adults.

All staff will receive information relating to this Protection Policy including the Expected Employee Standards during the induction process. Specific briefing and/or training will be provided as appropriate for staff visiting projects or working with communities.

It is expected that all staff treat children and vulnerable adults (and indeed all out beneficiaries) fairly and with respect and integrity and to be aware of the power that they can have over beneficiaries by virtue of their employment with ETI.

ETI staff uphold the integrity of ETI and ensure that personal and professional conduct is and is seen to be of the highest standard. As such they are expected to report any abuse by a staff member, volunteer, consultant, intern or partner to the HR Manager and other appropriate authorities at once.

**Prevention**

We will ensure, through awareness and personal & professional conduct, that staff and others minimise the risk to children & vulnerable adults.

We have in place guidelines covering the recruiting process of all new staff, consultants, volunteers, interns and trustees. The recruitment guidelines will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they accurately reflect child safe recruiting and screening standards.

We pay great importance to references before appointment. If any of our staff are deployed to work with communities, we will work with the Country Office to ensure that any other checks are carried out as appropriate.

**Use of Child Photos and Information**

Pictures, images, or other likenesses of children and/or information related to children & vulnerable adults that could compromise their care and protection will not be made available through any form of communication media without proper protection and understanding of their use. Images with corresponding text which may identify a child or vulnerable adult should be removed. We will also change names as appropriate.

This will be monitored and overseen by the Head of Communications and Fundraising.

*At present we do not routinely carry out CRB checks on staff as they do not have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. We will be reviewing this again in 2015.*